Fictional Names and Fictional Characters

Research Thesis

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by

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1. Introduction

Saul Kripke and Nathan Salmon agree that Sherlock Holmes is an actually existing abstract object that isn't an actual in-the-flesh detective (but there is a detective according to the fiction). Kripke and Salmon also agree that, at least sometimes, the name 'Sherlock Holmes' refers to that fictional character. Kripke thinks, though, that sometimes, when we use 'Holmes' to pretend to refer to a detective, the name doesn't refer to anything at all, whereas Salmon denies that. In this paper I will look at two forms of Salmon's argument against Kripke's view. I will argue that Salmon's view about names from fiction fares no better in the face of Salmon's own objections to Kripke's view. Whether or not Salmon's objections work against Kripke's view, the objections do not give us a reason to prefer Salmon's view instead. In Section 2, I will present Kripke's ontology of fictional characters, on which fictional characters are real, abstract entities. In Section 3, I will present Kripke's view of names from fiction followed by a discussion of how Salmon argues against Kripke's view. In Section 4, I will present Salmon's alternative views of names from fiction. I will then argue that Salmon's views are subject to his own objection against Kripke's view and that, as a result, Salmon's views are not preferable to Kripke's.

2. Kripke and Salmon on Fictional Characters

Kripke argues that fictional characters exist and that ordinary language quantifies over them. In saying that ordinary language quantifies over fictional characters, Kripke is arguing for the existence of such fictional characters. In Lecture V of *Reference and Existence: The John Locke Lectures*, Kripke (2013: 80) says, "when I

speak of the ontology of fictional characters I am trying to give a report on the ordinary usage, first, of certain quantifications that we can make." Peter van Inwagen (1977: 302) uses the following sentence to illustrate how we use language to talk about fictional characters: 'There are characters in some 18th-century novels who are presented with a greater wealth of physical detail than is any character in any 18-th century novel.' van Inwagen argues that sentences like his "*seem* to assert that there are things of a certain sort: if anyone were to utter one of these sentences assertively, it would *seem* that what he would say could be true only if there were such things as characters in novels."[1] Kripke argues that these kinds of sentences are *"actually* true, and they relate people to a kind of entity whose existence is actually being claimed as an empirical claim."[2] So it's not just that sentences in ordinary language quantify over fictional characters; it's also that these sentences are true. The truth of 'There are fictional characters', which is entailed by van Inwagen's sentence, requires that there are indeed fictional characters that exist to be quantified over. If some sentence quantifies over fictional characters and that sentence is true, then that is evidence in favor of the claim that fictional characters exist.

Kripke's view is that fictional characters exist because works of fiction about them have been written or stories about them have been told. In Lecture III of *Reference and Existence*, Kripke (2013: 72) says that Mark Twain brought both a novel and a character into existence in writing *Huckleberry Finn*. Both the novel and the character exist; the existence of Huck Finn is empirically tied to the existence of

[1] van Inwagen 1977: 302. Italics in original.
[2] Kripke 2013: 80. Italics in original.

the novel. It is not a priori that the fictional character Huck Finn exists; empirical evidence, in this case the fact that Mark Twain wrote the novel, is needed to justify the existence of the fictional character. So, on Kripke's view, fictional characters exist in virtue of concrete activities like writing a novel or telling a story. In Lecture IV, Kripke (2013: 80) says that "there might have been, of course, no fictional characters at all, had no fictional works been created" and concludes that fictional characters "exist merely in virtue of the activities of people."

Kripke (2013: 73) says that "a fictional character, then, is an abstract entity." Kripke explains that, sometimes, when we use names from fiction, like 'Hamlet', we use the names "to designate abstract but quite real entities."[3] In presenting Kripke's view of fictional characters in his paper "Nonexistence," Salmon says "that wholly fictional characters should be regarded as real things." But, although a fictional character, like Sherlock Holmes, might be real, fictional characters are not real people. Salmon (1998: 293) says that, for Kripke, fictional characters are "neither physical objects nor mental objects" but instead are abstract entities.

In Lecture III, Kripke draws an analogy between fictional characters and nations. Kripke (2013: 73) says that a fictional character is an abstract entity "which exists in virtue of more concrete activities the same way that a nation is an abstract entity which exists in virtue of concrete relations between people." On Kripke's view, nations and fictional characters are not tangible things; instead they are abstract, but nonetheless real, entities. Nations and fictional characters alike exist in virtue of certain human actions. Kripke does not explicitly say how or when nations

[3] Kripke 2013: 78.

come into existence, but on his view a claim about a nation "is true in virtue of, and solely in virtue of, the activities of the people."[4] Similarly, a claim about a fictional character is true in virtue of human actions like "telling stories, writing plays, writing novels, and so on."[5]

In Salmon's discussion of Kripke's views about the ontology of fictional characters, it is clear that he is convinced by Kripke's conclusions. For example, Salmon (1998: 293) begins his discussion of Kripke's view with the introduction "we begin with a plausible theory of fiction."

3. Kripke on Names from Fiction

3.1. Two Uses

Kripke says that there can be empty names from fiction. In this case, to say that a name is empty is to say that the name does not refer to anything. This is possible because, when an author creates a character, she only pretends that the name refers to something. I will call this view the *pretend reference view*.

> **The pretend reference view:** Whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, she uses it, and when we use it that way we pretend that the name refers to something.

For example, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in creating the character Sherlock Holmes, created a name that does not refer on Conan Doyle's original use of the name in writing the *Holmes* stories. The name 'Sherlock Holmes', as used originally by Conan Doyle, was not intended to refer to anyone in the real world. Using a different

[4] Kripke 2013: 73.
[5] Kripke 2013: 73.

example, Kripke (2013: 81) says, “when one originally introduces the term ‘Hamlet’, there is merely a pretense of reference, and there is no referent—period.”

Kripke argues that, on another use of the name, ‘Sherlock Holmes’ does indeed have a referent: namely the fictional character itself. Kripke’s view is that, by pretending that there is a character named ‘Sherlock Holmes’, Conan Doyle created an abstract entity, the fictional character Sherlock Holmes, which people can refer to outside of the fiction. Salmon, in “Nonexistence,” discusses Kripke’s view about this second use of a name from fiction. Salmon (1998: 294) says, “It is only at a later stage when discussing the fictional character from a standpoint outside of the fiction, speaking about the pretense and not within it” that our language makes a semantic move that makes the name a name for the fictional character. So, according to Kripke, this use of the name of a fictional character, such as ‘Sherlock Holmes’, from the standpoint outside of the fiction is distinct from the original use of ‘Sherlock Holmes’ on which it operates as an empty name.

3.2. Kripke on Truth in Fiction

Kripke says that the sentence ‘Sherlock Holmes lived on Baker Street’ is true because it has the implicit operator ‘fictionally’ or ‘in the story’. In this case, the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’ would be used in the manner of the name that has as its referent the fictional character Sherlock Holmes and not in the manner of the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’ that has no referent. Kripke (2013: 74) argues that, as a rule, predicates should be used according to their use in fiction and that sentences are true if and only if “a fictional character is so described in the appropriate work of

fiction." Using the implicit operator 'in the fiction', it is possible to utter true or false sentences about fictional characters as long as what is said is true or false as described in the work itself. So, on Kripke's view, sentences spoken from outside the fiction about the fictional character Sherlock Holmes are true just in case the different, but corresponding, sentences originally penned by Conan Doyle that use the nonreferring name 'Sherlock Holmes' are true. The sentence 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' is true (when referring to the fictional character), then, because Conan Doyle wrote this in the *Holmes* stories.

4. Salmon's Objections

In "Nonexistence," Salmon considers Kripke's ontology of fictional characters and agrees with his conclusions; Kripke and Salmon agree about the ontology of fictional characters, but not about the semantics of names from fiction.[6] Salmon's view differs from Kripke's view concerning how a name from fiction, like 'Sherlock Holmes', refers. Salmon introduces terminology to help express Kripke's view that there are two ways in which we use names from fiction, like 'Sherlock Holmes'. Salmon (1998: 294) introduces the expression 'Holmes$_1$' to correspond to Conan Doyle's use of 'Sherlock Holmes' in creating the fiction, a use that "merely pretends to name someone and actually names nothing at all"; and he introduces the expression

[6] In 1998, when Salmon wrote "Nonexistence," he presented Kripke's view from an unpublished form of *The John Lock Lectures*, which Kripke gave in 1973. Those lectures were later published as a book, *Reference and Existence*, in 2013. In footnote 32 in "Nonexistence," Salmon cites "*The John Locke Lectures for 1973* (Oxford University Press, unpublished)" when presenting Kripke's views.

'Holmes$_2$' to correspond to the nonpretend use of 'Sherlock Holmes' as a name that refers to a fictional character.

Salmon (1998: 294-295) distinguishes between *object-fictional* sentences and *meta-fictional* sentences in describing Kripke's "complex account of sentences from fiction." Salmon does not provide an explicit definition of these kinds of sentences, but he provides examples to characterize them. Sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' are object-fictional sentences, and meta-fictional sentences are sentences like 'According to the stories, Sherlock Holmes plays the violin'. If Kripke is right and a name from fiction has two uses, those corresponding to 'Holmes$_1$' and 'Holmes$_2$', and a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' can be read as prefixed or not with the operator 'according to the story' or 'according to the fiction', then a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' can be interpreted in four different ways:

(1) Holmes$_1$ plays the violin.

(2) According to the stories, Holmes$_1$ plays the violin.

(3) Holmes$_2$ plays the violin.

(4) According to the stories, Holmes$_2$ plays the violin.

Kripke and Salmon agree about object-fictional and meta-fictional sentences in which the name 'Holmes$_2$' occurs; it is only when it comes to sentences in which 'Holmes$_1$' occurs that Salmon's view departs from Kripke's. Salmon (1998: 295) says that we can read sentences like (3) from within the fiction, in which case the sentence would be saying something true as part of the pretense. This case, which involves 'Holmes$_2$', is a case where Kripke and Salmon draw the same conclusions.

Salmon (1998:295) says that sentence (3) may be counted as true if it correctly reflects what is true within the fiction; Salmon (1998: 295) says this is due to Kripke's "extended use of predicates, on which 'plays the violin' correctly applies to an abstract entity when it is a character from a fiction according to which the corresponding fictional person plays the violin."

Kripke argues that, when we use sentences like (1), they should not be understood as expressing propositions that are false in the real world, but instead should be understood as not expressing a proposition at all. Because (1) includes the name 'Holmes$_1$', which has no referent, the sentence itself does not express a proposition. Instead, we should understand sentences like (1) to be using the name of a pretend man; Kripke (2013: 295) argues that "using the sentence [in an attempt] to make a statement not within the pretense and instead about the real world outside the fiction, the sentence expresses nothing and is therefore not literally true."

Another view, which I call the *no reference view*, is relevant here in connection with Salmon's objections to Kripke's view.

> **The no reference view:** Whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, *n*, there is no use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u* the name refers to something.

On this view, there is no name 'Holmes$_1$' and no use *u* such that, when we use 'Holmes$_1$' on *u*, 'Holmes$_1$' refers to a man or anything else. It seems that Kripke's pretend reference view entails the no reference view. On the pretend reference view there is a name 'Holmes$_1$' and a use *u* such that when Conan Doyle used 'Holmes$_1$' on

use *u* we pretend that 'Holmes$_1$' refers to a man, but it doesn't really. So we can say that, in this case, there is no use *u* of 'Holmes$_1$' such that the name refers to a man—which just is the no reference view (provided that the name doesn't refer to anything else, either). That Kripke's pretend reference view entails the no reference view is important in Salmon's objection, because Salmon thinks having a view on which the name 'Holmes$_1$' has no reference is subject to criticism.

Salmon's view departs from Kripke's because Salmon thinks that having a view that allows there to be sentences in which no proposition is expressed is problematic. Salmon (1998: 297) says that "this renders the meaningfulness of true-meta fictional sentences like 'According to the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, Holmes plays the violin' problematic and mysterious." Salmon's objection to Kripke's view can be formulated in the following manner:

(P1) The pretend reference view is true. (Assumption for reductio.)

(P2) If the pretend reference view is true, then the no reference view is true.

(C1) The no reference view is true. (From (P1) & (P2).) The no reference view says that whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, *n*, there is no use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u* the name refers to something.

(P3) If it is not the case that the name 'Holmes$_1$' has a referent, then it is not the case that (1) expresses a proposition.

(C2) It is not the case that (1) expresses a proposition. (From (C1) & (P3).)

(P4) (1) is true "with respect to the fiction" only if it expresses something.

(C3) It is not the case that (1) is true "with respect to the fiction." (From (C2) & (P4).)

(P5) (2) is true if and only if (1) is true "with respect to the fiction."

(C4) (2) isn't true. (From (C3) & (P5).)

(P6) Intuitively (2) is true.

(C5) The pretend reference view is false. (From (P1), (C4) & (P6) by reductio ad absurdum.)

For this argument, Salmon assumes that Kripke's view is true so that he can show how what follows from the view cannot turn out to be right. As I mentioned, the pretend reference view entails the no reference view; on the no reference view there is no use of the name 'Holmes$_1$' on which the view refers to a man or anything else. In the discussion of Kripke's view, we saw that (P3) is true; Kripke argues that, if a name has no referent, like 'Holmes$_1$', then sentences in which that name occurs express no proposition. (C2) follows, then, because the nonreferring name 'Holmes$_1$' occurs in sentence (1), so it is not the case that (1) expresses a proposition. Salmon argues that (P4) is true; sentences are true "with respect to the fiction" only if they express something. (C3) follows; (1) does not express a proposition, and sentences can be true "with respect to the fiction" only if they express a proposition, so it is no the case that (1) is true "with respect to the fiction." (P5) is true, because Salmon argues that (2) is true if and only if (1) is true with respect to the fiction, and (1) isn't true with respect to the fiction, so (2) isn't true. But (P6) is correct; (2) *is* true. It is obvious that (2) is true and, if we were asked to mark the sentence 'Holmes$_1$

plays the violin' true or false, it would be intuitively true. Salmon concludes that Kripke's view must be false, by reductio ad absurdum.

Salmon's objection to Kripke can be read in a different way, too:

(P1) The pretend reference view is true. (Assumption for reductio.)

(P2) If the pretend reference view is true, then the no reference view is true.

(C1) The no reference view is true. (From (P1) & (P2).) Whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, *n*, there is no use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u* the name refers to something.

(P3) If it is not the case that the name 'Holmes$_1$' has a referent, then it is not the case that (2) expresses a proposition.

(C2) No proposition is expressed by (2). (From (C1) & (P3).)

(P4) If it is not the case that (2) expresses a proposition, then it is not the case that it is either true or false.

(C3) (2) is neither true nor false. (From (C2) & (P4).)

(P5) Intuitively, (2) is true.

(C4) The pretend reference view is false. (From (P1), (P3) & (P5) by reductio ad absurdum.)

The difference in this reading of Salmon's objection is that, in this case, sentence (2) itself does not express a proposition either. Because the name 'Holmes$_1$' occurs in (2), (2) doesn't express a proposition itself, and so is neither true nor false. And,

again, Salmon argues that (2) is intuitively true. So, on either reading, Salmon concludes that Kripke's view is false by reductio ad absurdum.

Salmon's thinks that, intuitively, sentence (2) is true, and we want to be able to say that it is true. But we can't do this if Kripke is right and all the sentences that Conan Doyle wrote that contain 'Holmes$_1$' do not express any propositions at all. Salmon objects to Kripke's view, because he thinks we get the wrong results with respect to sentences (1) and (2). A feature of Salmon's objection is that Kripke's pretend reference view entails the no reference view, which Salmon thinks is false. (P2) in both forms of his objection say that the pretend reference view entails the no reference view, and the rest of the argument follows from this. Salmon (1998: 297-298) sums up his objection to Kripke's view that a name from fiction has two uses: "if object-fictional sentences like 'Holmes$_1$ plays the violin' express nothing and only pretend to express things, how can they be true with respect to the fiction, and how can meta-fictional sentences involving object-fictional subordinate clauses express anything at all, let alone something true?"

4. Salmon on Names from Fiction

4.1. Two Views

Salmon (1998: 298) says that "one need not claim, as Kripke does, that a name like 'Sherlock Holmes' is ambiguous"; Salmon thinks that there is no good reason to hold onto the name 'Holmes$_1$', the name Conan Doyle originally pretends to use to refer to a man within the fiction. Salmon (1998: 298) says,

> Why hold onto an alleged use of [the names of fictional characters] that fails to refer to them? It is like buying a luxurious sports car only to keep it garaged.

His analogy, though a little odd, highlights Salmon's most basic rejection of Kripke's view—why even hold the view that there is a name that does not refer to anything or anyone? If there are fictional characters, we should be able to refer to them using their names as written in the fiction, just as a nice car should be driven.

Salmon begins to develop his alternative view of how names from fiction, like 'Sherlock Holmes', refer. Salmon (1998: 299) says that, "even if one regards a name as something that exists independently of its introduction into language (as is my inclination), it is a confusion to think of a name as referring, or not referring, other than as doing so *on* as particular use."[7] In this part of his paper, however, there are two separate views that Salmon might be understood as holding, and it is unclear which of these two views Salmon ultimately holds. In neither view that Salmon introduces does the name 'Holmes$_1$' refer. The first view I will call *the pretend use view*.

> **The pretend use view:** Whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, *n*, we pretend that there is a use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u* the name refers to something. (On this view, we pretend that there is a use of the name on which the name refers to something but there is not really a use of the name on which the name refers to anything.)

[7] Italics in original.

On this view, there is the name 'Holmes$_1$', and we pretend that there is a use such that when we use the name in that way it refers to a man. I will call the second view *the pretend name view*.

> **The pretend name view:** Whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, the author is only pretending that there is a name, *n*, and a use, *u*, such that when the author uses *n* on *u* it refers to something. (On this view, the author is pretending that there is a name and a use on which the name refers to something, but there is not really a name or a use of the name on which the name refers to something.)

On this view, Conan Doyle pretended there is the name 'Holmes$_1$' and a use such that when we use 'Holmes$_1$', it refers to a man, but there isn't really the name 'Holmes$_1$' or a use of the name.

There is evidence that Salmon holds the pretend use view. Salmon (1998: 299) says that, "The alleged use of 'Sherlock Holmes' on which it is thoroughly nonreferring was supposed to be a pretend use, not a real one." Salmon thinks that Conan Doyle originally did not use the name 'Holmes$_1$' because he only pretended to. Salmon (1998: 299) says that, although Conan Doyle "wrote the name down as part of sentences in the course of writing the *Holmes* stories," it was a pretend use as part of the pretense of the story, and he never actually used it. Salmon (1998: 299) compares Conan Doyle's use of 'Holmes$_1$' to the use actors make of their lines during a performance; he says "it is not a use whereby the one speaking commits him/herself to the propositions expressed."

Salmon (1998: 299) argues that, as Conan Doyle wrote the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, he created the fictional character Sherlock Holmes, which plays a role in the stories. Salmon says that,

> The name 'Sherlock Holmes' was originally coined by Conan Doyle in writing the story (and subsequently understood by readers reading the *Holmes* stories) as the fictional name for the protagonist. That thing—in fact merely an abstract artifact—is *according to the story,* a man by the name of 'Sherlock Holmes'.[8]

So, in this case, there is a fictional character. The fictional character is not a man, but according to the fiction it is. There is a name that does not refer to a man, given how Conan Doyle originally only pretended to use it, but according to the fiction it does.

On the pretend use view, "the alleged thoroughly nonreferring use of 'Sherlock Holmes' by Conan Doyle, as a pretend name for a man, is a myth" and this mythical use of the name 'Sherlock Holmes' that corresponds to '$Holmes_1$' is "an allegedly thoroughly nonreferring use that pretends to name a brilliant detective who performed such-and-such exploits."[9] But, Salmon (1998: 300) says, there is no literal use of 'Sherlock Holmes' that corresponds to '$Holmes_1$'. His view gets complicated, here. Salmon (1998: 300) explains,

> At a later stage, use of the name is imported from the fiction into reality, to name *the very same thing* that it is the name of according to the story. That thing—now the real as well as the fictional bearer of the name—is according to the story a human being who is a brilliant detective, and in reality an artifactual abstract entity created by Conan Doyle.

So the name '$Holmes_1$', which Kripke holds to be a nonreferring name that Conan Doyle pretends to use to name a man, has no real use, and only the name '$Holmes_2$'

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[8] Italics in original.
[9] Salmon 1998: 300.

corresponds to the name 'Sherlock Holmes'. Although the name 'Holmes$_2$' is originally not used at all—because, although according to the fiction it has a use, it does not really have a use, outside the fiction—later, from the standpoint outside the fiction, it has a real use on which it refers to the abstract fictional character Sherlock Holmes.

But there is another way to read Salmon's view about names from fiction. In his discussion of the pretend use view, Salmon sometimes seems to be endorsing the pretend use view only to segue into the pretend name view. Salmon (1998: 299) says that "the pretend use of the name 'Sherlock Holmes' by Conan Doyle does not have to be regarded as generating a use of the name on which it is nonreferring." As we saw before, for Salmon, a name refers to something or someone only on a particular use. But, in this case, no name was genuinely introduced. If there is no genuine use of 'Holmes$_1$', and a name only refers on a use, then there is no name 'Holmes$_1$' that refers. It is here that Salmon suggests the pretend name view; Salmon (1998: 299) says that, "one might go so far as to say that a pretend use by itself does not even give rise to a real name at all, any more than it gives birth to a real detective." So, if the name 'Holmes$_1$' does not really have a use, and there is not really a name 'Holmes$_1$', then it is not the case that the name 'Sherlock Holmes' refers—because there is no name to do the referring.

It is important to note, however, that Salmon draws the same conclusions when he considers the pretend name view as he does with the pretend use view. In neither case is there a name *and* a use; on one there is a name, but no use, so the name does not refer on any use, and on the other there is no name, and no use, so it

is not the case that there is a name that refers on any use. If, with this notation of 'Holmes$_1$' and 'Holmes$_2$', the subscripts are supposed to correspond to a use, and with both the pretend use view and the pretend name view there is no genuine use of the name 'Holmes$_1$', then there is no 'Holmes$_1$', since there is no genuine use for the subscript to correspond to.

Salmon puts forward his views as an alternative to Kripke's, and in considering either of the views he presents, Salmon eliminates the possibility that there is a nonreferring name, 'Holmes$_1$', in the way that Kripke posits. Salmon draws the conclusion that the expression 'Sherlock Holmes', which corresponds to 'Holmes$_2$', is later imported out of the fiction and turned into a name when a use is bestowed upon it; the name on that use refers to the fictional character.

Before getting back to object-fictional and meta-fictional sentences, it is important to mention what Salmon has to say about propositions. On Salmon's (1998: 301) view, "Conan Doyle's sentences involving ['Sherlock Holmes'] express singular propositions about his character" that he was originally only pretending to assert. Salmon (1998: 301) says that the *Sherlock Holmes* stories could be understood as a sequence of propositions; he says that Conan Doyle only pretended to assert these propositions and "in doing so, Conan Doyle pretended (and his readers pretend) that the propositions are true propositions about a real man." Salmon (1998: 301) sums up his view well when says that,

> To assert a proposition, in this sense, is in part to commit oneself to its truth; so to pretend to assert a proposition is to pretend to commit oneself to its truth. And the propositions in question entail that Holmes was not an abstract entity but a flesh-and-blood detective. Taken literally, they are untrue.

Salmon (1998: 302) thinks that "it is of the very essence of a fictional character to be depicted in the fiction as the person who takes part in such-and-such events, performs such-and-such actions, thinks such-and such thoughts"; a fictional character gets its essence from propositions that people pretend to assert and believe. It might be strange to think of a fictional character as getting its essence from propositions, but it seems that's what Salmon's view comes down to, since for an entity *x* to be depicted as having a property *F* in the fiction is for the proposition that *x* is *F* to be in the set of propositions that is the fiction.

Salmon (1998: 302), in an effort to explain why his view is to be preferred over Kripke's, says that his analysis "yields a straightforward account—what I believe is the correct account—of the meaningfulness and apparent truth of object-fictional sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin', and thereby also of the meaning and truth of meta-fictional sentences like 'According to the *Holmes* stories, Holmes plays the violin'."[10] So Salmon thinks his account of names from fiction is the correct account, and this is because, as Salmon argues, his account yields better results than Kripke's when considering the truth of object-fictional sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' and also the truth of meta-fictional sentences like 'According to the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, Sherlock Holmes plays the violin'. Salmon does not make it clear here whether he is talking here about 'Holmes$_1$' or 'Holmes$_2$', but since his objection to Kripke's view pertains only to sentences (1) and (2), which contain the name 'Holmes$_1$', I think we are supposed to assume he is talking here

[10] Italics in original.

about sentences (1) and (2).[11] Salmon has a technical view about why, on his account, object-fictional sentences are true:

> The object-fictional sentence is not true with respect to the real world, since abstract entities make terrible musicians. But it is true with respect to the fiction—or true "in the world of the fiction"—by virtue of being entailed by the propositions, themselves about fictional characters, that comprise the fiction, taken together with supplementary propositions concerning such things as the ordinary physical-causal structure of the world, usual social customs, etc., that are assumed as the background against which the fiction unfolds.

On Salmon's view, Conan Doyle, in writing the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, pretended to assert the proposition that Holmes plays the violin. Because he did this in the course of his writing, we can say that it is true, with respect to the fiction, that the fictional character Sherlock Holmes plays the violin. Moreover, a meta-fictional sentence like "'According to the fiction, f, ϕ' is true with respect to the real world if and only if ϕ is true with respect to the mentioned fiction."[12] Salmon (1998: 304) concludes that, since his view gets the right results when considering the truth-value of sentences like (1) and (2), which he argues Kripke's view gets wrong, his account of names from fiction is preferable.

4.2. An Objection

Salmon puts forth two views and concludes that they result in a better picture of names from fiction than does Kripke's view. I argue, however, that Salmon's objection to Kripke's view can be applied to Salmon's view directly, with minimal change, to show that Salmon's views are no better in the face of his own objection.

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[11] I will return to this question later in in my discussion of my objections to Salmon.
[12] Salmon 1998: 303.

Recall that any sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' can be interpreted in four different ways:

(1) Holmes_1 plays the violin.

(2) According to the stories, Holmes_1 plays the violin.

(3) Holmes_2 plays the violin.

(4) According to the stories, Holmes_2 plays the violin.

A key feature of Salmon's objection to Kripke's view is that Kripke's view entails the no reference view. It turns out, though, that Salmon's views both entail the no reference view as well. On the no reference view, whenever an author originally introduces what looks like a name from fiction, *n*, there is no use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u n* refers to something. On the pretend use view, there is a name 'Holmes_1' but we only pretend that there is a use such that when we use the name in that way it refers to a man. On the pretend name view the author pretends there is a name and a use such that when we use the name in that way it refers to a man. In neither case is there a use of the name 'Holmes_1' on which it refers to something, so both views entail the no reference view. This is a problem for Salmon. Here is how Salmon's argument against Kripke's view can be used against Salmon's own views:

(P1*) Either the pretend use view or the pretend name view is true. (Assumption for reductio.)

(P2*) If either the pretend use view or the pretend name view is true, then the no reference view is true.

(C1) The no reference view is true. (From (P1*) & (P2*).) The no reference view says that whenever an author originally introduces what looks

like a name from fiction, *n*, there is no use, *u*, such that when we use *n* on *u* the name refers to something.

(P3) If it is not the case that the name 'Holmes$_1$' has a referent, then it is not the case that (1) expresses a proposition.

(C2) It is not the case that (1) expresses a proposition. (From (C1) & (P3).)

(P4) (1) is true "with respect to the fiction" only if it expresses something.

(C3) It is not the case that (1) is true "with respect to the fiction." (From (C2) & (P4).)

(P5) (2) is true if and only if (1) is true "with respect to the fiction."

(C4) (2) isn't true. (From (C3) & (P5).)

(P6) Intuitively, (2) is true.

(C5*) The pretend reference view and the pretend name view are false. (From (P1*), (C4) & (P6) by reductio ad absurdum.)

As earlier mentioned, that Salmon thinks Kripke's pretend reference view entails the no reference view is part of Salmon's objection to Kripke. Since Conan Doyle only used the name 'Holmes$_1$' to pretend to refer to a man, Salmon is able to argue against the pretend reference view. If this undermines the pretend reference view, then the pretend use view and the pretend name view are likewise undermined. So, Salmon's view likewise entails the no reference view and can then be argued against.

(P1*) says that it is not the case that on either of Salmon's views 'Holmes$_1$' refers. If on neither view there is a referent for the name 'Holmes$_1$', then both views entail the no reference view; it is not the case (on

either view) that there is a name, 'Holmes$_1$', and a use such that when we use 'Holmes$_1$' on that use it refers to the man and detective Sherlock Holmes, or to anything else. If (P1*) is right, then the rest of Salmon's own argument follows and we can conclude that there is no reason to prefer Salmon's view over Kripke's in the face of this argument.

Salmon might argue that the pretend use view and the pretend name actually do not entail the no reference view. Salmon thinks that he gets around the problem he has with Kripke's view, which is that sentences with the name 'Holmes$_1$' do not express propositions. Salmon thinks that there is never any genuine use of 'Holmes$_1$' and that it doesn't matter if the name doesn't refer, because it is only the fictional character—whose only legitimate name 'Holmes$_2$'—that we should worry about. Salmon says that Conan Doyle spun an elaborate pretense in creating the *Sherlock Holmes* stories by pretending to assert propositions. He argues that Conan Doyle only pretended to assert propositions and that at a later time the use of 'Sherlock Holmes' is imported into reality to refer to the fictional character Holmes, whose essence is based off of propositions Conan Doyle originally only pretended to assert.

But, Conan Doyle originally only pretended to assert propositions in writing the sentences that make up the *Holmes* stories, then the sentences do not express propositions with respect to the fiction; these sentences were never asserted in a non-pretend way and therefore do not have any legitimate truth value. Salmon thinks that the essence of the fictional

character, Holmes, comes from the propositions Conan Doyle originally pretended to assert. If Conan Doyle only pretended to assert propositions on which the essence of the fictional character is based, he too didn't really assert a proposition. And, to use Salmon's own argument against his view, if no proposition is expressed by (1), then it is neither true nor false. And, if (1) is neither true nor false, then (2) isn't either, since what is true "according to the fiction" is based off of what Conan Doyle pretended to assert about Holmes (and how can you base something true off of a sentence that expresses nothing?). Salmon's view is no better than Kripke's, then, in these respects.

I have one last consideration in objecting to Salmon's view about names from fiction. Salmon argues that his account of names from fiction is better, because it results in better conclusions when considering the truth of object-fictional and meta-fictional sentences. This is a bit misleading, though, because Salmon never explicitly says whether he is talking about 'Holmes$_1$' or 'Holmes$_2$' in the passage where he states this. In order for Salmon's account to be preferable over Kripke's, it needs to yield the results mentioned above, but about 'Holmes$_1$', not about 'Holmes$_2$'. It seems here, though, that Salmon is talking about 'Holmes$_2$', because he says, as previously mentioned, that, "in all our genuine discourse about Holmes, we use the name in the 'Holmes$_2$' way."[13] This is a problem for Salmon. If Salmon thinks he is sidestepping the problem by saying the name 'Holmes$_1$' (if he thinks it's

[13] Salmon 1998: 303.

even a name) is not genuinely ever used and therefore we should only talk about 'Holmes$_2$', then he isn't solving the problem at all.

Works Cited

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